II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

a. Project Title: ***Discover the Flyway***
Applicant: Yolo Basin Foundation, Inc.

b. Project Description and Primary Biological/Ecological Objectives

The goal of the *Discover the Flyway* (DTF) educational program is to make wetlands and their stewardship, in the context of the Yolo Basin, a consistent educational component in the elementary and middle schools of the Sacramento Region.

The program takes an ecosystem approach to educate teachers and students about wetland ecosystems and habitats. The educational content of DTF includes ecosystem relationships, habitats, species composition, human and natural threats, compatible land uses, and direct participatory action. Our objective is to encourage and develop long-term interest in wetland protection and restoration. The experience and knowledge that DTF offers will ultimately provide thousands of children the tools they need to make informed decisions about their environment.

DTF uses teacher-training workshops to provide teachers with the experience to successfully lead classroom, field studies and restoration activities in the Yolo Basin. Participating teachers are trained to use existing adapted curriculum following the state educational frameworks. Essential components of the program include recruiting teachers to participate in the program, training the teachers, scheduling field trips, recruiting, training and scheduling volunteers to assist on the field trips, coordinating and distributing plant materials, facilitating the field studies, and assessing the outcomes of the program.

c. Approach/Tasks/Schedule

Program year 1998/99: Implement **Phase 2**: Expand program to include curriculum and activities for middle school students and curriculum and activities for expansion sites. Emphasis is on the on-site, hands-on habitat restoration activities that are available to participating teachers.

Program year 1999/2000: Continue Phase 2 and implement **Phase 3**: Expand program to include high school students; develop educational materials/activities for upper grades, expand trips/training sessions for the general public. Develop additional section of teacher workbook to address relationship of Yolo Basin to Bay-Delta issues.

d. Justification for Project and Funding by CALFED

The newly established Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area offers a unique opportunity to promote ecosystem and habitat restoration as identified in the CALFED Implementation Strategy (ERPP, p. 26). The Yolo Bypass contains six priority habitats, seven of the priority species and shows examples of nine of the stressors affecting priority species and habitats. (Please refer to Attachment 2 for Habitat Type Map.) The Wildlife Area and the new City of Davis Wetlands offer opportunities for students see the results of a successful, continuing partnership and to be personally involved in a large ecosystem restoration project within the Yolo Basin.

e. Budget Costs and Third Party Impacts

Phase 2: CALFED: $27,172 Yolo Basin Foundation: $27,172
Phase 3: CALFED: $32,606 Yolo Basin Foundation: $21,737

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Total request from CALFED: $59,778 to support two years of DTF program.

Due to the positive educational benefits of the *Discover the Flyway* program no negative third party impacts are anticipated.

f. Applicant Qualifications

The Foundation was formed in 1990 as a community based organization to assist in the establishment of the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. It is a non-profit public benefit corporation dedicated to educating and inspiring people about wetlands and wildlife of the Central Valley. The 15-member board of directors represents a diverse group of interests, from agriculture and waterfowl conservation to local government and the business community (See Attachment 3). It is universally credited with being the driving force behind the successful Yolo Basin partnership. The result of the Foundation's efforts is the creation of a 3700-acre public Wildlife Area, with over $12 million of state and federal funding. The successful implementation of Phase 1 of the *Discover the Flyway* program, as well as other educational programs administered by the Yolo Basin Foundation, are examples of the Foundation's abilities to develop and implement successful educational programs.

g. Monitoring and Data Evaluation

Numbers of participants and geographical location will be tracked for each year of the program. Teachers are asked to fill out evaluation forms at the workshop to give effective feedback on course content. A teacher advisory panel is available for direct input into workshop content and suitability of curriculum for students. A peer review of field visits by cooperating environmental educators will be implemented. Additionally, evaluation forms will be sent to field trip participants specifically regarding the quality of their trip. Monitoring the survival rate of the restoration will be an ongoing part of the program.

h. Local Support/Coordination with other Programs/Compatibility with CALFED objectives

The *Discover the Flyway* program is a partnership with California State Department of Fish and Game. Current year funders include: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, US Environmental Protection Agency, the Teichert Foundation, Friends of Yolo Basin Foundation, the City of Davis, and the Fidelity Charitable Trust. Volunteers from the community offer services such as Wildlife Observation and recording, leading public field trips, writing newsletter articles and assisting with student field trips. A natural tie-in to other environmental education programs within the Putah-Cache Creek Bioregion is being coordinated through the Regional Education Alliance, a project of the Public Service Research Group, with an ongoing grant from the National Science Foundation.

The program is compatible with seven of the CALFED objectives outlined in the ERPP. The educational program focuses on many of the ecosystem processes and beneficial aspects of the newly created Wildlife Area and Davis Wetlands, and the privately owned Conaway Ranch. These include restoring habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds, restoring permanent and seasonal habitat for wildlife, improving floodplain functions, improving water quality, assisting in the recovery of special status wildlife, restoring Bay-Delta foodweb organisms, reducing adverse affects of invasive, non-native plants, and learning about beneficially managed agricultural lands for wildlife species. Additionally, it strives to increase public awareness and conservation efforts, compatibility of urban life and agriculture, and effective wildlife management.